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ASSISTANCE IN MINE CLEARANCE

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Since 1993, the General Assembly has been seized with the issue of assistance in mine clearance. In its resolution 51/149 of 13 December 1996, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-second session a report on progress achieved on all relevant issues outlined in his reports to the Assembly at its forty-ninth (A/49/357 and Add.1 and 2), fiftieth (A/50/408) and fifty-first (A/51/540) sessions on assistance in mine clearance and on the operation of the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance.

2. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request. It provides information on the activities of the organizations of the United Nations system, as well as those of other bodies and non-governmental organizations involved in mine-action activities. It reports on ongoing mine-action programmes in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, the former Yugoslavia (particularly Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, including Eastern Slavonia), the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Mozambique. The report also addresses the functioning of the Voluntary Trust Fund.

3. In response to various requests made by the Assembly in its resolution 51/149, the responsible entities of the United Nations have continued and enhanced their humanitarian work in the area of landmine assistance. The responses to those requests are described in the present report, but special note should be made of the following:

(a) Before the transfer of responsibilities to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (see below), the Department of Humanitarian Affairs engaged in several important initiatives, including the conduct of several assessment missions to evaluate the humanitarian impact of mines; the initiation, management and transfer of mine-action programmes in the field; the development and promotion of international safety standards for humanitarian mine clearance; a review of the United Nations Landmines Database and other information-handling programs; and a distillation of lessons learned by the international community in the implementation of humanitarian mine-action programmes over the past five years;

(b) The work of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, in providing essential operational mine-clearance support to several United Nations missions, and its work in the development of standard operating procedures and technical systems. Those responsibilities, in accordance with the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly entitled "Reviewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" (A/51/950), have since been expanded to include functions and responsibilities related to demining activities and the management of the Trust Fund, responsibilities formerly belonging to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. As the transfer took place on 13 October, subsequent to the period covered by the present report, no further details regarding it are included here;

(c) The work of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in holding extensive consultations with mine-awareness practitioners and the subsequent

development of comprehensive guidelines of good practice for mine-awareness programmes. These guidelines have been distributed to all those working in mine action to ensure that minimum safety standards, cultural sensitivities, and lessons learned are applied to mine-awareness programmes globally.

II. UNITED NATIONS MINE-CLEARANCE PROGRAMMES

A. The role of the entities of the United Nations system

4. The international community has come to realize that only an integrated and holistic response to the issue of landmine contamination, and its multifaceted humanitarian and socio-economic consequences, is capable of bringing real and lasting benefits to those who are considered at risk from those weapons. Such integrated mine-action initiatives cannot be limited to field-based programmes in countries where a humanitarian disaster has already occurred as a result of landmine contamination. The United Nations and other leading practitioners in the sector of mine action have long acknowledged that advocacy at the international level is also required of those who concern themselves with the plight of mine-affected communities, most of which are marginalized - even within their own societies - and lack any sort of collective voice.

5. The United Nations thus engages in, or facilitates and supports, the activities described below, all of which it considers to be essential and mutually reinforcing elements of integrated international mine-action programmes.

6. At the international level there is a public information strategy the aim of which might be described as consciousness-raising, including straightforward dissemination of information on the humanitarian consequences of landmine use as well as advocacy designed to assist the process of imposing a global ban on anti-personnel landmines. Clearly, the two aims are intimately connected. Consciousness-raising can also be considered from the perspective of what might loosely be termed "donor education". Not only is it important to highlight continually the human and societal consequences of landmine contamination and hence the need for funding for mine action, but it is also necessary to accentuate the full range of perspectives and activities such programmes comprise, from mine eradication to victim assistance.

7. In the field, mine action consists of several core elements, including mine-awareness and mine-risk education. As long as minefields pose a direct threat to the lives, limbs and prosperity of civilians in the post-conflict period, it will be essential to operate mine-awareness and mine-risk education programmes. The overall aim of such programmes is to assist people in living more safely in a mine-contaminated environment through communication-based initiatives. To be effective in the long run, such programmes need to help those living in landmine-affected areas to see their condition more objectively and to modify their behaviour and attitudes accordingly. However, it is also becoming increasingly clear that such programmes must be operated in a participative and respectful manner with regard to the mine-affected community. Often a community has a unique understanding of the nature, scale and impact of the landmine problem in its area, and that understanding has to be considered in

assisting those implementing mine-action programmes in order to structure and target their initiatives in an appropriate fashion.

8. The eradication of mines and unexploded ordnance is of course the central technical element of mine-action programmes and in many respects is their most instantly recognizable, satisfying and tangible result. The process consists of three equally important phases: technical survey and verification, minefield marking and eradication. Clearly such activities can become sustainable only if local capacity is built up under international guidance during the early period of mine-action programmes. Training and skills transference are thus essential, not only with regard to technical and engineering skills, but also in the effective management and tasking of technical capacity. This ensures that the humanitarian and developmental benefits of the clearance that does take place are maximized for the local community. Given current technological constraints, most demining is still a manual process, involving deminers meticulously searching the ground with metal detectors and prodders. Advances have been made in detection technology and in the development of machines to undertake mine clearance. However, these advances are slow, and an appropriate level of confidence in their use has yet to be assured. In the meantime, the use of dogs for detection is being increased, and manual methods are being refined. Thus, the process is inevitably extremely slow. For that reason alone it is essential that the areas cleared are those of highest priority to the mine-affected communities themselves, and not only to the local authorities and business interests. Increasingly, it is being realized that this is possible only through establishing mechanisms capable of involving the community in the direction of technical resources. To achieve those ends, participants in mine-action programmes are learning a great deal about participative programme planning from community development practitioners. That learning process is seen as central to the maturation of international mine-action programmes, a process that can only improve their effectiveness and sustainability.

9. Lastly, holistic mine action has to acknowledge the needs of victims. Victims of mines and unexploded ordnance have very specific medical needs, differing significantly even from those of other war trauma patients. In this area, where medical assistance is highly specialized, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has to some extent become the world leader, focusing on surgical, medical and prosthetic intervention. But, for the many victims of mines, much more remains to be done.

B. United Nations mine-action operations

1. Department of Humanitarian Affairs

10. Until quite recently, no mechanisms or financial resources were available to address the humanitarian issue of anti-personnel landmines and unexploded ordnance. This lack of basic technology and infrastructure, combined with the scarcity of financial resources to address the issue, led to the creation of the Mine Clearance and Policy Unit within the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. The Department, which was designated the focal point for mine-related activities during the period covered by the present report, has developed, through its Mine Clearance Policy Unit, an integrated approach to the problem by coordinating the

capacities of the various departments, programmes and associations within the United Nations system, as well as those of non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in addressing the mine problem. At the same time, the Department recognized that the ultimate responsibility for landmine problems lay with the affected country.

11. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs was mandated to develop more formal working arrangements with all parties in order to outline more clearly the role each agency would play in providing assistance in mine clearance. In executing that mandate, the following principles were considered:

(a) Action to address the mine problem had to begin as early as possible. Such action was seen to include data gathering and socio-economic impact studies, which should lead into and inform advocacy work, mine awareness and medical programmes as soon as possible, often before the peace process itself has started;

(b) The peace process, in turn, was to acknowledge and address the mine issue by setting out the political and infrastructural framework needed to begin a mine-action programme once the situation allowed it;

(c) The mine-action plan was then to address more than just the need for eradication. It was, if possible, to include three key elements: mine awareness, mine clearance and victim assistance. Mine awareness was to encompass information gathering and social research about the impact and meaning of landmine contamination, mass information and dissemination campaigns and grass-roots activities that aimed at promoting general awareness messages, as well as more specific risk-reduction and safe practices education. Mine clearance was to foster conformity with agreed international standards and locally determined priorities. Priority setting was to be a broad and well-informed consultative process involving the results of targeted data gathering and socio-economic impact research initiated under the plan, together with the participation of key stakeholders from the central political level, regional authorities and grass-roots communities. Even in areas where mine clearance could not be undertaken because of security or other considerations, efforts needed to be made to carry out risk reduction and to assist the injured. Where possible, information essential to the conduct of mine clearance was still to be gathered and plans were still to be made to begin demining as soon as the situation permitted. There was to be an ongoing evaluation of all programme activities, and an analytical capability was to be established to make sense of programme information generated, especially that relating to the social impact of mines in the country. The plan was also to address the needs of landmine survivors, including their medical, social and economic rehabilitation and reintegration. Lastly, everything within the plan was to be undertaken with a view to establishing a national capacity to respond to the multi-faceted challenges presented by landmines and unexploded ordnance. For programmes to be sustainable and appropriate in the long term, local people had to be swiftly empowered to take charge of the management and development of them;

(d) The principle of comparative advantage was to apply, and those most capable and readily available should be given responsibility to undertake various elements of the plan;

(e) Finally, it was important to recognize that even the best integrated mine-action plans alone would not solve the problem, and that it was equally important to pursue efforts to prohibit landmines totally and to stigmatize their use.

12. While the Department of Humanitarian Affairs was charged as focal point for those activities within the United Nations system, certain organizations stood out as key partners in its efforts in the arena of mine action.

2. Department of Peacekeeping Operations

13. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations was, throughout the reporting period, responsible for mine-clearance and awareness activities related to peacekeeping missions. This role, which was to expand substantially in the context of the reform proposals announced by the Secretary-General (A/51/950), was reconfirmed by the Security Council in its presidential statement on demining (S/PRST/1996/37), in which it was stated that operational demining should be, wherever appropriate, an important element and an integral part of peacekeeping mandates. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations provided, and continues to provide, technical support to mine-clearance and surveying operations conducted during peacekeeping missions. It also advised the Department of Humanitarian Affairs on technical issues such as the provision of equipment to demining operations. It worked closely with the Department to ensure the smooth transition from peacekeeping demining operations to long-term humanitarian programmes, from mine clearance in support of the implementation of a peacekeeping mission to programmes involving the development of long-term national capacity to support a viable, appropriate and well-targeted national mine-action plan that meets the needs of a nation over several decades. One of the most challenging management areas was, and remains, the prioritization of the myriad possible work tasks and the consequent deployment of resources. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations is now addressing that challenge, along with those on which it has traditionally focused and the others that were assigned to it in the context of reform.

14. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations has recently produced statements on mine-clearance policy, standard operating procedures and international standard formats to be published in 1998. The standard operating procedures describe departmental policy and procedures to be used in mission areas where there is a threat from landmines, unexploded ordnance and improvised explosive devices. Accepting that conditions vary from country to country, the policy and standard operating procedures are designed to allow missions to develop their own procedures that reflect the cultural, environmental and operational conditions within the mission. Work has also begun on a system for graphically representing information contained in the electronic standard formats.

3. United Nations Children's Fund

15. UNICEF has developed a three-pronged approach in response to the landmine issue, consisting of global advocacy for a ban, support to non-governmental organizations for physical and psycho-social rehabilitative services for

landmine survivors and community-based mine-awareness initiatives. In its advocacy work, UNICEF has lent its support to the so-called "Ottawa process" - negotiations on a treaty to ban landmines (see paras. 93 and 94 below) - as well as regional initiatives such as those of the Organization of African Unity and the efforts of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. Endorsing General Assembly resolution 51/149 and realizing the need to coordinate efforts among the United Nations, ICRC, donors and non-governmental organizations, UNICEF continues to collaborate with those institutions, both at headquarters and in countries, including Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Mozambique, at the field level.

16. In the area of mine awareness, UNICEF has taken a lead role by developing international guidelines on mine-awareness education, a practical guide that draws on best practice in this important sector of mine action.

4. United Nations Development Programme

17. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has played a major role in worldwide mine action through the management of multi-donor operations that are also designed to build national capacities for demining. Currently, UNDP is supporting and facilitating the management of mine-action programmes in Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Similarly, in the course of the past year, UNDP has assumed responsibility for programmes established by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in Angola and Mozambique, becoming involved, as it typically has, once the emergency phase is over and when building national capacity has become of paramount importance. Since November 1993 in Cambodia, for example, UNDP has managed a trust fund established to support the national agency responsible for mine action (the Cambodian Mine Action Centre). Thus far, the Trust Fund has received some $32.5 million for the Centre. It is hoped that, by 1998, the agency will be able to manage its own affairs. UNDP is also involved in the support of similar trust funds in Angola, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Mozambique, all of which hope to nurture national mine-action agencies that will be capable of taking charge of all mine-action requirements, in a sustainable fashion, in the medium to long term. In addition, in some instances, UNDP has initiated demining programmes that support development efforts.

5. World Food Programme

18. The World Food Programme (WFP) has continued its support of mine-clearance activities that come under its mandate. WFP has worked with a wide range of partners, from the local authorities and the military (in Guatemala), to peacekeeping forces (in Cambodia), to non-governmental organizations and commercial demining companies (in Angola and Mozambique). Such activities include projects to demine and rehabilitate major transportation corridors to enable WFP to meet its relief mandate, support for the clearance of residential and agricultural land to allow the resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons and initiatives to clear land for agricultural use to promote sustainable levels of local food production. The role of WFP has ranged from the direct funding of mine action (in southern Africa for example) to the

provision of food and logistical support to United Nations and other mine-clearance initiatives. To improve its ability to conduct activities related to demining in the future, WFP has established a demining focal point within its Augmented Logistics Intervention Team for Emergencies.

6. Other international bodies

19. Other United Nations agencies, including the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Labour Organization have engaged in mine-action activities on a more limited basis. For example, the World Health Assembly, at its fiftieth session, held in Geneva from 5 to 14 May 1997, adopted a resolution (WHA 50.19) endorsing a plan of action on violence and health, which includes measures related to injury surveillance.

20. The World Bank has taken important steps in the mine-action arena over the past 12 months, establishing mine action as an important part of its activities in financing reconstruction in post-conflict areas. In February 1997, the World Bank Group adopted operational guidelines for the financing of landmine clearance, and, in the same month, established a Post-Conflict Unit, partly to support Bank project teams preparing programmes for mine clearance. So far, the World Bank has funded mine-action work with soft loans in both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

21. ICRC has been involved in mine action since 1979, mostly in the area of victim assistance. Traditionally, this has focused on major surgical, medical and prosthetic programmes. Recently, however, ICRC has expanded its institutional responses to new areas, having come to see the landmine issue as an epidemic, which, like other epidemics, calls for a dramatic and comprehensive solution. This includes, on the one hand, prevention, through a total ban on anti-personnel mines and community mine awareness and, on the other hand, assistance to victims through dramatically improved access for landmine survivors to transport, emergency care, surgery, rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

22. As part of its approach, ICRC committed itself to a total ban on anti-personnel landmines in 1994. More recently, it has stressed the necessity of an integrated approach to mine victim assistance, based on the structured flow and analysis of information, in which all sectors of mine action are fully coordinated and mutually reinforcing. At the Conference on Anti-Personnel Landmines, held in Tokyo on 6 and 7 March 1997, ICRC put forward the concept of a mine information system in affected areas through which all actors - governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations, deminers, the United Nations and ICRC - could pool relevant information and work together to improve the overall effectiveness of programmes.

23. ICRC is very interested in continuing to play a special role in the area of victim assistance. In that regard, to ensure the consistent and coherent provision of information, it is preparing, with input from specialist non-governmental organizations, a standardized mine incident report form. Since 1995, ICRC has maintained a registry of landmine incidents reported by credible

sources throughout the world. To date, it has records on some 7,404 persons from more than 41 countries, although this is clearly only the tip of the iceberg, and such victim databases will greatly increase once they are linked to systematic grass-roots data-gathering initiatives. The ICRC mine-awareness programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina is based on such a comprehensive and ongoing information-gathering mechanism, and, as such, not only provides the structure and content of the mine-awareness programme, but also provides a ready source of invaluable information about the problem to other mine-action agencies through the focal point of the United Nations Mine-Action Centre in Sarajevo.

C. The role of non-governmental organizations

24. The United Nations mine-action programmes work closely with non-governmental organizations, which deserve tribute for their considerable work in this field. Non-governmental organizations recognize that, while clearance is the ultimate necessity in mine-affected communities, there is a vital role for mine-awareness programmes that seek to help people live more safely in a mine-contaminated environment until the mines can be cleared. In addition to ensuring that people understand the threat in their community clearly, awareness programmes must ensure that people are involved in constructing their own awareness programmes, which can be expanded to include the development of long-term "safer village" strategies. This is essential to ensure that mine-awareness programmes are appropriate and sustainable.

25. Handicap International worked in Angola with the Unit for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance for Angola and the Central Mine-Action Office to provide technical assistance to the Angolan national Institute for Removal of Explosive Devices. Supported by funds from the Trust Fund, Handicap International provided technical assistance in logistics, administration, human resources management and financial management. Handicap International is also being engaged to set up a local demining non-governmental organization in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

26. The Halo Trust is a non-governmental organization that focuses overwhelmingly on the eradication of mines and unexploded ordnance. Like other humanitarian organizations in the sector, Halo seeks to develop an indigenous capacity and to hand over control of operations to local authorities as soon as possible. Halo is currently operational in eight countries, in several of which operations have been under way for as long as five years. Halo has established programmes in Afghanistan (more than 1,000 manual mine clearers and three mechanical units based in Kabul), Angola (more than 300 manual mine clearers in the Planalto region), Cambodia (more than 550 manual mine clearers in the north-west, together with three mechanical units), Mozambique (more than 250 manual mine clearers based in the four northern provinces) and Nagorny Karabakh (where a comprehensive programme of mine clearance, mine awareness, surveying, data gathering and assistance in establishing a central capacity has just been completed). New programmes have been set up in Chechnya (for more than 200 mine clearers based in Grozny), Georgia (to work on both sides of the Georgia/Abkhazia conflict line), and southern Sudan (to work alongside Operation Save Innocent Lives with more than 100 deminers). Halo has a wide range of donors, including private foundations, organizations such as Pro Victimis, bilateral

sources (the Governments of Finland, Germany, Ireland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America) and multilateral sources such as the European Union (EU).

27. The Mines Advisory Group is a humanitarian, non-profit, non-governmental organization. It is dedicated to the work of eradicating landmines and unexploded ordnance in order to save lives and to return land to subsistence farming communities, refugees, displaced people, nomadic groups and the poor worldwide. This is achieved by establishing an indigenous capacity to clear mines and ordnance through expert instruction and continuing on-the-job training and advice. The Mines Advisory Group also implements landmine-awareness programmes in communities affected by mines and unexploded ordnance to reduce loss of life while the long-term task of clearance is undertaken. The agency is fully operational in four countries (Angola, Cambodia, northern Iraq and the Lao People's Democratic Republic) and conducts mine-awareness programmes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia. Recently, the Mines Advisory Group conducted assessment missions to countries of the Islamic Republic of Iran and countries of the former Yugoslavia. The Mines Advisory Group campaigns for a ban on the production, trade and use of anti-personnel mines and is a founding member of the Steering Committee of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines.

28. Aware of the multifaceted impact of landmines and unexploded ordinance and of the particular risks that they pose for children, the Save the Children Fund is incorporating mine-awareness education and, in some areas, mine clearance, among its child-centred programmes in mine-affected countries. In Afghanistan and the countries of the former Yugoslavia, such work is focused on gathering data on mine victims, interviewing victims and, building on that research base, providing mine-awareness education for children and parents. Often those programmes are implemented in schools and pre-schools. The Save the Children Fund is also involved in constructing safe playgrounds in the community. In Angola, it has also engaged in mine clearance in key areas, such as refugee resettlement areas, vital food security areas, community school grounds and health facilities. The Fund also actively supports the International Campaign to Ban Landmines.

29. Norwegian Peoples Aid, together with the Mines Advisory Group and Halo, is one of very few voluntary organizations that has specialized in all aspects of mine-action programmes, including eradication. Having started mine-action work in Cambodia in 1992, Norwegian Peoples Aid now runs mine-action programmes in four other countries (Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, northern Iraq and Mozambique). The mine-action work of Norwegian Peoples Aid can be divided into the following elements: mapping minefields, training and organizing local deminers, eradicating mines (manually and using trained mine dogs), developing mine-awareness programmes, developing new methods for mine clearance (for example, it has recently tested new mechanical systems in Bosnia and Herzegovina) and lobbying internationally and nationally for a total ban on anti-personnel landmines. Prior to initiating mine-action programmes, Norwegian Peoples Aid believes there is a need for what it calls a "total analysis" of the region in which mine-related problems are included on the same level as other problems. Such analysis serves as the foundation upon which to build mine-action programmes that are integrated into a broader rehabilitation and development plan.

30. The humanitarian field work of the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation focuses on running prosthetics and physical therapy programmes for landmine survivors in Angola, Cambodia, El Salvador and Viet Nam.

31. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines, launched in 1992, is a coalition of more than 1,000 non-governmental organizations from more than 50 countries, and includes human rights, humanitarian, children's, peace, veterans', medical, development, arms control, religious, environmental, and women's groups that work locally, nationally, regionally and internationally to ban anti-personnel landmines. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines is coordinated by a steering committee of nine organizations, including agencies that are already deeply engaged in other areas of mine action, such as the Mines Advisory Group, Handicap International and the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation. During the month of December, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines received the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of its instrumental role in generating massive awareness of the humanitarian issue of anti-personnel landmines and in coordinating growing public support for a total ban.

D. Country programmes

1. Afghanistan

32. The Afghanistan mine-action programme is the largest, longest-running and most fully indigenized programme of its kind ever mounted. Established in 1989, it is controlled and coordinated under the auspices of the mine-clearance programme of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan. With its headquarters in Islamabad, the programme operates out of four regional offices (in Kabul, Qandahar, Herat and Jalalabad) in Afghanistan.

33. As the mine-action programme enters its ninth year of operations, it has an impressive track record. From its inception until the end of May 1997, over 550 square kilometres of mine-affected land had been identified, over 251 square kilometres of which had been designated as high-priority. ("High priority" areas are defined as those that have an immediate impact on people's lives, such as residential areas, commercial areas, agricultural land, irrigation canals, roads and grazing areas, which are needed for basic survival and income generation.) A total of 164.9 square kilometres had been surveyed, and 112.1 square kilometres of high-priority land contaminated by landmines had been cleared, much of which had surrounded important regional centres. In addition, 99.3 square kilometres of former battlefield areas had been surveyed and cleared of unexploded ordnance. As a result of those operations, some 580,000 explosive items were destroyed. Mine-awareness briefings were given to some 3.2 million people.

34. The contributions received by the programme in 1996 amounted to $17.2 million, which was used to clear some 21.5 square kilometres of high-priority mined areas and 34.2 square kilometres of former battlefield areas. In addition, 20 square kilometres of high-priority mined areas and 28.2 square kilometres of former battlefield areas were surveyed and marked.

35. The programme set ambitious but realizable targets for 1997. Those included clearing mines from 28 square kilometres of high-priority areas, and clearing unexploded ordnance from some 20 square kilometres of high-priority former battlefield areas (with an estimated budget of $18 million). The programme aims to survey and mark an additional 20 square kilometres of high-priority mined areas and 20 square kilometres of lower-priority areas (with an estimated budget of $1.44 million). Additionally, some 600,000 civilians, including returning refugees, have been targeted for mine-awareness activities (with a budget of $0.9 million). Finally, $400,000 has been dedicated to training to maintain current operations and to allow for expansion. However, the response to the 1997 consolidated appeal for a total requirement of $21.9 million has been slow and disappointing. As at June 1997, only 40 per cent ($8.879 million) had been received.

2. Angola

36. Limited capacity exists in Angola to address the enormity of the mine problem affecting the country. To address the problem adequately, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and UNDP have jointly developed a two-year project to support the development of a national mine-action capacity for Angola. On 19 April 1997, a project document was signed by representatives of UNDP and the Government of Angola for a two-year United Nations mine-action programme for Angola to support the development of the National Institute for the Removal of Explosive Devices (INAROE). This national organization was to be capable of developing and managing a national mine-clearance plan incorporating its integral assets and the resources of specialist non-governmental organizations and other international agencies. The project will continue the support to INAROE that was provided by the Third United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) until its termination on 30 June 1997 and by the Unit for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Angola under the auspices of the UNAVEM III mandate.

37. Specific project objectives are to enhance the management capability of the INAROE national headquarters to execute a national mine-action programme, to enhance the ability of INAROE to manage the operational and support requirements for mine-clearance and related activities at the regional level, to implement mine-clearance and related operations and to establish a national training school.

38. During the UNAVEM III mandate period, INAROE was established as a skeletal organization that still required the assistance of technical and management experts to develop its functional areas at the headquarters and field levels. INAROE must consolidate its existing organization, consisting of a national headquarters, 4 regional headquarters and 7 demining brigades, to enable it to be operationally effective before expanding to its full envisaged strength of 18 demining brigades by the end of 1998.

39. Over a two-year period, the project will train Angolans as deminers and in associated mine-clearance skills (surveying, mine awareness, mine marking and explosive ordnance disposal) and management skills at appropriate levels. At the end of the project the management structure and functional areas of INAROE

(operations and administration) will be established and capable of sustaining operations at the national, regional and field levels under predominately Angolan management.

40. By the end of the project, the Central Mine-Action Training School will be completely under Angolan management with Angolan instructors undertaking all instructional duties. The need may still exist within the School for limited technical advice in specialist areas. At the same point, the number of operational demining brigades will have increased from 7 to 18, provided the capability exists within INAROE to support an increase and sufficient funds are made available from the Government of Angola or the international community. All demining brigades will be staffed and supervised by Angolans with limited technical advice from international technical advisers.

3. Cambodia

41. Landmines, estimated at 4 to 6 million, continue to affect more than 50 per cent of Cambodia and, combined with the problem of unexploded ordnance, constitutes a major impediment to socio-economic development. With one in every 236 Cambodians an amputee and more than 100 casualties per month, Cambodia has the highest proportion of amputees in the world.

42. Mine-clearance operations were transferred to a national entity, the Cambodian Mine-Action Centre, in 1992, but it continues to receive technical advice from the United Nations through UNDP. The Centre has significantly expanded the scope and breadth of it mine-clearance activities, and, as at July 1997, employed 2,296 nationals in 55 demining platoons, 30 mine-marking teams, 15 explosive ordnance disposal teams, and 12 mobile mine-awareness teams.

43. The Centre has cleared 152 minefields covering approximately 43,343,740 square metres. Mine-clearance and explosive ordnance disposal teams have destroyed 73,515 anti-personnel mines, 704 anti-tank mines and 406,664 unexploded pieces of ordnance. Through its mine-verification programme, mine-marking teams have identified and marked 59 square kilometres, representing 380 minefields.

44. The minefield information database maintained by the Cambodian Mine-Action Centre has been greatly enhanced by the results of a two-year minefield verification project, which sought to confirm the true scope of the landmine problem. The Centre's database has registered 2,458 square kilometres, representing 2,684 minefields, of which 1,469 square kilometres, or 1,450 minefields, have been verified. The verification process has resulted in the overall identification of 1,059 square kilometres, representing 714 minefields, which are now known not to be mined.

45. The Centre's mine-awareness programme, while still operating at the national level, has undertaken a six-fold expansion of its mine-awareness training at the village level. Mine-awareness teams have reached 332,443 individuals in 717 villages. The aim of such mobile village teams is to reduce the rate of injuries caused by mines and unexploded ordnance. That approach is

supported by awareness programmes publicized through newspapers, television and radio programmes, a national mine-awareness curricula, and Mine-Awareness Day.

46. The Centre has set specific targets in its five-year strategy for the period from 1996 to 2000 in the areas of mine clearance, training, awareness, and surveying.

4. Former Yugoslavia

(a) Bosnia and Herzegovina

47. Following the signing in November 1995 of the Dayton Agreements, various United Nations agencies, together with the Implementation Force, ICRC and numerous non-governmental organizations, began to address the effects of anti-personnel landmines and unexploded ordnance throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

48. The United Nations Mine-Action Centre was established early in 1996 as part of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH). To enable it to address longer-term humanitarian, rehabilitation, and reconstruction mine-clearance priorities, the mine-action programme was handed over to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in June 1996. At the field level, the Mine-Action Centre remains part of UNMIBH.

49. The Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina remains fully responsible for defining and implementing an integrated mine-action programme that serves the needs of the country as a whole. The key role of the United Nations, which is central to the process, is therefore one of providing expert assistance, drawing on the extensive experience of the international community in developing and implementing such integrated humanitarian mine-action programmes.

50. By June 1997, considerable progress had been achieved. The Mine-Action Centre had established its Headquarters in Sarajevo with a full complement of staff, consisting of 13 United Nations international, 19 gratis international and 54 local staff. Currently, the staffing of an employment mechanism to support 102 local demining staff is ongoing. Fully functional regional offices had also been developed in Mostar, Banja Luka, Tuzla, and Bihać, and a small office in Pale had been established for coordination. Training of mine-clearance personnel is being carried out in the regions by mobile training teams. Those teams are training personnel for United Nations requirements as well as carrying out training to support other agencies involved in the mine-action plan. Training commenced on 23 May, and the first group of deminers graduated on 23 June. The initial operational capacity will be deployed in three demining and three minefield marking teams, in Mostar, Banja Luka and Tuzla. Other initiatives within the current Mine-Action Centre plan for 1997 include the development of a local non-governmental organization in Bihać (initially under expatriate guidance) and the establishment of a small fund ($850,000) to facilitate a series of small contracts for emergency clearance projects.

51. While the United Nations Mine-Action Centre has a small operational capacity to conduct mine-awareness activities, its primary role is to coordinate other agencies that are better placed to develop a national curriculum and to implement grass-roots and participative programmes in the field. Key agencies involved include ministries of education, ICRC, UNICEF, UNESCO and Handicap International. ICRC has been implementing a nationwide mine-awareness programme since 1996 and has developed a mass media campaign together with a grass-roots, integrated data-gathering and mine-awareness programme. Landmine survivor data, gathered in six locations in 1996, was expanded to three additional locations early in 1997, and is starting to generate a comprehensive picture of the human impact of mines and unexploded ordnance in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Accurate records for the first 11 months of 1996 contain information on some 312 landmine survivors: 193 from the Muslim-Croat Federation and 119 from the Republika Srpska. That initial information equates to an overall casualty rate of some 30 per month in 1996, although there are some indications that those figures might still under-represent the scale of the problem. More recent information indicates that there were some 102 casualties in the Sarajevo area alone in 1996, and recent United Nations estimates suggest a revised figure of around 90 incidents a month. Additionally, 80 per cent of the casualties are male, the majority of them farmers.

52. By 1 January 1997, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs had spent some $700,000 on the development of the Mine-Action Centre since taking it over on 1 June 1996. An additional $6.8 million was received in February 1997, enabling the Mine-Action Centre to implement its programme, as detailed above. Those funds secured the Centre's operations until September 1997. However, project management estimates that a further $22.8 million will be required to allow operational expansion to the planned full programme level during the second half of 1997, much of it being required to support the projected and desirable level of demining capacity. Simply to maintain the current capacity will require $3 million.

53. Other major donors active in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1997 include the World Bank, EU and a United States of America government programme. Both the World Bank and EU have chosen to work with international and local commercial companies on a variety of mine-clearance and explosive-ordnance disposal projects, which are designed primarily to allow rehabilitation of essential infrastructure. The $15 million United States programme was implemented by the international commercial company Ronco. It involved the establishment of training facilities at Brus and Mostar and the organization of teams of some 90 mine clearers and 75 surveyors together with 31 mine survey dogs, which were deployed to Tuzla, Banja Luka and Mostar. At the end of the programme in May 1997, the Bosnian teams elected to become a commercial company and were transferred to the national Demining Commission. The mine-action work of the United Nations Stabilization Force, which followed the implementation force of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Bosnia and Herzegovina, includes funding minor clearance contracts as well as coordinating and monitoring 450 personnel from the former warring factions who were trained and equipped with United States State Department funding. In accordance with the London Declaration of December 1996, the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina is to assume full ownership of the programme. This goal is being pursued in close collaboration with UNMIBH.

54. The only international humanitarian non-governmental organization currently operational in Bosnia and Herzegovina is Norwegian People's Aid, which has a small training and operations facility in Tuzla.

(b) Croatia (including Eastern Slavonia)

55. As in Bosnia and Herzegovina, four years of conflict have left many hundreds of thousands of landmines and numerous items of unexploded ordnance contaminating the Croatian environment. Areas of contamination are congruent with former front lines and areas of confrontation, with the severest contamination being closely identified with the former United Nations Sectors North and South (the former Serb-controlled Krajina) and Sectors West and East (Western and Eastern Slavonia). While no one can yet accurately estimate the total number of items at large or which areas are contaminated, historic estimates have assumed 3 million anti-personnel landmines, and recent government estimates suggest that as much as 13,000 square kilometres (a quarter of the land surface of Croatia), are being treated as suspected mined areas.

56. The United Nations Mine-Action Centre came under the direction of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in June 1996. Since the context in Croatia is, however, clearly unique, the Mine-Action Centre does not intend to operate any mine-action programme there. Rather, it acts primarily as technical adviser to the Government of Croatia and as the primary interface between the Government, donors and other interested parties in mine-action programmes. Ultimately, it is intended that the Mine-Action Centre structure be handed over to the Government, and a memorandum of agreement was signed in the summer of 1997 to that effect. While responsibility for the programme will rest fully with the Government of Croatia, the United Nations is likely to continue to provide assistance well into 1998.

57. In Croatia, mine action is firmly in the hands of the Government, which, since the war ended, has passed a demining law and established an inter-ministerial Commission for Demining Issues, known as Mungos. The current demining law provides that Mungos is the sole demining agency permitted to operate in Croatia. However, a recent World Bank loan for more than $30 million required that greater competition be introduced into the area of demining, and the sector is expected to open up to more demining agencies, including international commercial companies, in the near future.

58. Mungos reports that since its creation in June 1996 as the national demining agency, 5.3 square kilometres have been cleared. The Centre for Demining, another official Croatian demining body, in this case reporting directly to the Ministry of Defence, operates primarily in Eastern Slavonia. It too reports an extremely high level of clearance (6 square kilometres) in its first operational period, from July 1996 to May 1997. Some concerns have been expressed, both with regard to the casualty rates experienced by the Croatians (which have been high in comparison with those of other national and United Nations demining programmes) and also with the quality of clearance that has been completed. Both of those issues are currently being addressed through dialogue between the United Nations, the Croatian authorities and the donors.

59. By June 1997, the main United Nations Mine-Action Centre office in Zagreb had been established, together with regional offices in Karlovac and Knin (former Sectors North and South), and Daruvar and Vukovar (former Sectors West and East). The Vukovar office is operating in the area under the administration of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES), and works in close cooperation with the UNTAES Mine-Action Centre, as described below.

60. At the central level, the Mine-Action Centre has been working with the Government on a range of issues, such as the establishment of the Commission for Demining Issues, the development of a series of mine-action plans and the modalities of transferring the Mine-Action Centre to the Government of Croatia. The existing mine-information database has been maintained and developed, and mine information has been made available to various government authorities and other interested bodies, such as international and national non-governmental organizations. In addition, a proposal for the establishment of a sustainable system for monitoring mine casualties has been forwarded to the United Nations for funding.

61. During both 1996 and 1997, the Mine-Action Centre in Croatia has operated on a small budget of $1 million a year. This is not an operational budget, but merely supports the Mine-Action Centre as an institutional presence. In addition to those "core costs", numerous project requests have been readily identified and passed on to the United Nations for funding from the Voluntary Trust Fund. The current priority projects identified by the Mine-Action Centre require more than $20 million.

62. In Eastern Slavonia, UNTAES established a Mine-Action Centre in Vukovar in March 1996. The Centre maintains good relations with the Mine-Action Centre located in Osijek and the central Mine-Action Centre in Zagreb. The Centre now has an excellent database of minefield records, thanks to the cooperation of both parties. In addition to operational mine clearance in support of the UNTAES mission carried out by the Force engineer units, the Vukovar Centre has coordinated and supported mine-clearance projects implemented by local Serb and Croat commercial demining companies. Limited funding to date has, however, severely delayed large-scale demining in Eastern Slavonia. A few infrastructure projects, such as the Deletovici oilfields, the railways and the power lines, have been completed. However, an initial release of funding from the Voluntary Trust Fund has allowed the initiation of a second phase of mine clearance for a pilot project of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the village of Ernestinovo.

5. The Lao People's Democratic Republic

63. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is one of the world's most ordnance-contaminated nations, and yet its burden of unexploded ordnance has only recently been acknowledged. Between 1964 and 1973, the Lao People's Democratic Republic experienced sporadic but intense ground battles and exceptionally heavy aerial bombardments.

64. More than 2 million tons of ordnance fell on the country during the nine-year conflict, the equivalent of one half ton for every man, woman and child in the country. Currently, anti-personnel sub-munitions pose the greatest threat to civilians; in many locations small tennis ball-sized bomblets, like the Blu-26, still litter the hillsides, paddies and forests. Such sub-munitions had an estimated failure rate of 30 per cent. Lying buried in the soil or scattered on the surface, those bomblets have become de facto anti-personnel landmines and typically cause death or injury when struck with the traditional Lao hoes during cultivation or when found on the surface and played with by curious children.

65. In 1994, the Mines Advisory Group initiated an unexploded ordnance removal project in Xieng Khouang province, in the area of the Plain of Jars, one of the most heavily contested, and thus heavily bombed, regions in the country. This was the first holistic, humanitarian mine-action programme to be undertaken in the country since the end of the war. The project was mounted in partnership with the Mennonite Central Committee and implemented under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. The Mennonite Central Committee provided both operational support and start-up financing to the field operations run by the Mines Advisory Group. Following a visit of government and United Nations officials to the project in 1995, UNDP took up the issue and started a lengthy negotiation process that led to the establishment of an unexploded ordnance trust fund at the end of the year. To date, $5,697,765 has been pledged to the trust fund by nine donor countries and UNDP, and more than $8 million has been pledged as in-kind contributions.

66. In February 1996, the Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Programme was created by a decree of the Prime Minister, and since then it has made significant progress.

67. In July 1996, a national training centre was established near Vientiane, with equipment and personnel provided by the United States Government. To date the centre has trained some 274 Lao students as basic deminers, community-awareness instructors or medics. During the second half of 1997, the emphasis has focused on training Lao team leaders and developing an indigenous instructional capacity.

68. As in other country contexts, the Lao Unexploded Ordnance Programme, as the national demining authority, acts more as a coordination and information exchange body than as an operational agency. In 1996, mine and unexploded ordnance clearance operations were conducted in three provinces. During 1997, operations have been expanded into an additional five provinces, with support from donors such as EU. By 15 June 1997, a total of 327 Lao field staff were employed in humanitarian mine and unexploded ordnance clearance by the Lao Unexploded Ordnance Programme or its implementing partners. In the next few years the Programme will take over full control of mature projects currently implemented by its partners. For example, preparations are under way for the handover of the Mines Advisory Group project in Xieng Khouang by 1998 or 1999.

69. All key positions at the Programme's headquarters, on the national steering committee, at the national training centre and in the provincial offices are currently filled by Lao staff. UNDP is funding further capacity-building initiatives, including management training for local programme staff. Planning

is currently under way to ensure that the structure is staffed entirely by local personnel by 1999, with each affected province having its own awareness and clearance capacity. Overall annual resource mobilization targets for 1998 and 1999 are $8 million, to be received either as cash grants or as contributions in-kind.

6. Mozambique

70. The United Nations Mine-Action Programme in Mozambique is focused on the continued development of the Accelerated Demining Programme, the provision of technical assistance to the National Mine Clearance Commission and the development of a mechanical mine-clearance capacity for Mozambique. The overriding objective of all components of the Programme is the development of a national mine-action capacity to enable Mozambique to address the mine problem it was left with after a prolonged period of war.

71. The Accelerated Demining Programme is a field operation involving 500 Mozambicans and a limited number of international staff, developed by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in 1994 under the auspices of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ). Upon the withdrawal of ONUMOZ, the responsibility for the operation was assumed by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and UNDP under a joint project developed with the Government of Mozambique. The initial project was to expire in January 1996, but was extended by letter until February 1997 when a new project document was signed, further extending United Nations support to the Accelerated Demining Programme until January 2000. The Programme is managed predominantly by Mozambicans with a small team of technical advisers provided by Australia, Germany and New Zealand. The operations of the Programme are coordinated with the national Mine-Clearance Commission and cover southern Mozambique (Maputo, Inhambane and Gaza).

72. The National Mine Clearance Commission is the national coordinating body for mine action in Mozambique. The United Nations, under a one-year UNDP project with the Government of Mozambique, is providing five international technical advisers to the National Mine-Clearance Commission in the areas of management, quality assurance, finance and operational planning. All mine-action activities in Mozambique are coordinating with the National Mine-Clearance Commission as the national coordinating body. The UNDP project to support the Commission will end in January 1998.

73. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs has developed a two-year project, to be implemented by the Office for Project Services, to introduce a mechanical mine-clearance capacity to the Accelerated Demining Programme. Initially the operation will be established under a commercial contract to develop a clearance system integrating machines and manual clearance techniques to achieve the minimum 99.6 per cent clearance rate required. The first six-month contract, which commenced on 1 August 1997, runs for six months. During 1998 mechanical operations will be integrated into the Programme once the capacity to manage and support mechanical clearance has been developed within it.

74. Mine-action activities in the central and northern regions of Mozambique are undertaken by non-governmental organizations and commercial contractors coordinated by the National Mine-Clearance Commission and funded by various donors and projects. The emphasis continues to be the development of a national mine-action capacity for Mozambique.

E. New country programmes and assessment missions

1. Iraq

75. Iraq's minefields are situated primarily along the border with the Islamic Republic of Iran and in many of the rural areas that were forcibly depopulated during the urbanization campaign of 1987 and 1988, which affected 3,000 villages. Hospital statistics between January 1991 and the end of 1996 indicate that 2,391 deaths and 4,324 injuries were reported among civilians as a result of mine or explosive ordnance accidents. Many people injured in mine accidents in this area are killed instantly, or do not survive long enough to reach a medical facility because of the long distances and lack of adequate transportation and first-aid provisions. Mines and unexploded ordnance affect every aspect of emergency relief work, stalling rehabilitation and resettlement of internally displaced people and hampering economic development in the region. In the agriculture sector, productivity is still at 2 per cent of former levels, and mines are the primary obstacle to returning to full production.

76. To date the United Nations has not mounted a large-scale humanitarian mine-action programme in Iraq; that responsibility has fallen predominantly on non-governmental organizations. However, recognizing the special needs of the population of the three northern Governorates, the United Nations Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq has made special provision under Security Council resolution 986 (1995) of 14 April 1995 (the "oil for food" programme) for the conduct of mine-related activities valued at $2.5 million. In that connection, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs undertook a field assessment mission in January 1997.

77. As a result of the assessment mission, the Department has developed a detailed project proposal to facilitate mine action in northern Iraq, which involved a partnership between the Department and the Office for Project Services. The Office for Project Services would also provide in-country staff to monitor the programme. However, those arrangements are still provisional pending the approval of the Committee established by the Security Council in its resolution 661 (1990) concerning the situation between Iraq and Kuwait and the Government of Iraq.

2. Georgia

78. The mine situation in Georgia was assessed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in August 1994. As a result of that assessment mission it was considered that the mine threat, from a humanitarian point of view, was not pressing. The minefields that do exist are well-defined, recorded and well-known to the local people. Therefore the impact on civilians is relatively low

compared with that in other mine-affected nations. There are, however, some randomly scattered minefields that affect civilians and impede repatriation and peacekeeping initiatives.

79. Mines do still pose a serious problem in the Gali region, and military observers of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia continue to limit their movement and to wear protective clothing when travelling in the area. The death of three members of the Commonwealth of Independent States peacekeeping force in the area on 22 February 1997 had a significant impact on its operations, which led to reduced patrolling. During February and March 1997, a total of seven mine explosions in seven separate incidents were reported. There is little doubt that the Commonwealth of Independent States peacekeepers, the Abkhaz militia and local inhabitants have been targeted by mine layers.

3. Guatemala

80. Thirty-five years of conflict in Guatemala resulted in a legacy of landmine contamination: estimates suggest that some 1,500 to 10,000 mines remained uncleared at the end of the conflict. A technical survey conducted before the deployment of the Military Observer Group of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala concluded that the mine threat was limited to a restricted area and that there was thus no need for operational demining to support the United Nations mandate. Nevertheless, the former guerrilla organization, the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca, helped to identify and clear its minefields, with logistical support and monitoring from the Mission. According to both parties, Guatemala is now free of mines, but the presence of unexploded ordnance is still a risk in former battlefield areas.

4. Tajikistan

81. One of the poorest of the former Soviet republics, Tajikistan suffered from a civil war during 1992 and 1993. The war and the Republic's secession from the Russian Federation badly affected an already weak economy. There is economic potential, however, owing to large mineral reserves, such as gold and uranium. The war also resulted in considerable anti-personnel landmine contamination. While precise information is not available, estimates suggest that some 50,000 to 100,000 mines have been laid to date. Minefields are found in three types of environment. The first of these is along the border with Afghanistan. Those minefields were laid mostly by Russian forces and are considered to have continuing strategic value. They are reportedly well-recorded, and it has been stated that they will be removed when they are no longer considered strategically important. Second, there are defensive minefields laid by government forces during the war to protect key installations, important regional centres and communications infrastructure. Third, there are minefields laid by opposition forces during the war, which are typically poorly marked and unrecorded. There is effectively a heavily mined zone of separation between territory controlled by the opposition in the western half of the country and the government-held lands in the east.

82. Despite the large number of mines deployed, the humanitarian impact has been considered to be marginal. The mined areas are sparsely populated and have only a limited impact on issues such as resettlement of displaced people and refugees. Similarly, casualty rates are believed to be low. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs took part in an inter-agency assessment mission in October 1996. A needs assessment report was prepared and a donor appeal was launched at the beginning of December 1996, with a donor alert period that initially ran until May 1997. This was subsequently extended until July. By May 1997, only 48 per cent of the appeal had been raised. Consequently, the mine-clearance elements of the appeal have not been funded.

83. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs conducted another assessment mission in July 1997 to review the initial plan of action. This called for the establishment of a full United Nations Mine-Action Centre. However, a more pragmatic and low-key response, building from the basis of existing in-country capacity, may be more appropriate.

5. Somalia and the Sudan

84. At the request of Somalia and the Sudan, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs conducted in-depth assessment missions to both countries in July 1997. While a serious humanitarian-related mine situation exists in both countries, the recommendations from the assessment team concerning the viability of initiating programmes have yet to be finalized.

F. Resources for mine-clearance activities

1. Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance

85. The Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance was established by the Secretary-General in November 1994 in order to support demining and landmine-related activities. The General Assembly, in its resolution 49/215 of 23 December 1994, welcomed the initiative and has regularly appealed to the international community to contribute to the Trust Fund. As at 1 November 1997, a total of $41,558,729.38 had been contributed and pledged (see annex). While donations to the Trust Fund have been impressive, there has been a year-to-year decline in the size of contributions. On the other hand, separate funds have been set up to support programmes formerly funded from the Trust Fund, namely in Angola and Mozambique. Nonetheless, a sizeable fund is required to bridge the gap while programme-specific arrangements are being worked out and to augment underfunded components of mine action.

86. An annual consultation process involving donors is recommended in order to replenish the Voluntary Trust Fund, but there has been no such meeting since the inception of the Fund. Such a mechanism would enable those responsible for the Fund to report to donors on the Fund's activities.

2. Consolidated inter-agency appeal

87. The consolidated inter-agency appeal process is the primary mechanism for mobilizing resources for complex emergencies. Over the past two years, mine-related programmes have been incorporated into the appeal process with some success. This funding mechanism will continue to be utilized, particularly for the development and reconstruction activities undertaken once a national entity is established.

3. Assessed peacekeeping contributions

88. Although it is not normally available for humanitarian mine action, a Trust Fund for Demining Activities in Angola was established in 1995 with a contribution of $378,787 from the Government of Switzerland. Those funds were fully utilized for partial funding, from April 1996 to March 1997, of international technical advisers who contributed to the establishment of the support systems to INAROE.

89. In a similar vein, the Trust Fund for Demining Activities in United Nations Peace Forces was established in 1995 and received a contribution of $3,000,060 from the Government of Japan. Those funds were made available to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs for funding projects in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

G. Advocating a lasting solution to a ban on landmines

90. The period covered by the present report will be remembered as a turning point in the process of banning anti-personnel landmines. Increasingly, Member States are coming to accept, in both theory and practice, that a holistic, humanitarian response to the issue of landmines must include a real commitment to an effective international ban.

91. The first Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (the Convention on Inhumane Weapons), which met in Geneva in May 1996, served both to heighten public awareness and to secure significant international political attention for the issue. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General of 23 October 1996 (A/51/540, paras. 98-101), while the amendments to Protocol II, which deals with landmines, were a welcome step forward, the amended Protocol contained shortcomings which effectively meant that only limited progress had been achieved after lengthy negotiations. It became clear that the new landmines Protocol was the best that could be negotiated by consensus at that stage. Nevertheless, over the past 12 months the amended Protocol has been ratified by a growing number of States.

92. Ironically, the relative lack of progress was to have far-reaching and dynamic consequences for the prospects of concluding an effective international ban on anti-personnel landmines within a reasonable time-frame. During the negotiating process, a number of Governments had started to state publicly their

support for an immediate and total ban. During the final session of the Conference, the broad outlines of an initiative by the Government of Canada started to emerge that sought to galvanize the pro-ban movement by facilitating a meeting in Canada in the autumn of 1996 of the pro-ban States and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. As a result, the Government of Canada sponsored the International Strategy Conference: "Towards a Global Ban on Anti-Personnel Mines", held in Ottawa from 3 to 5 October 1996.

93. The announcement of the Conference initiated an unprecedented "fast-track" approach, known as the "Ottawa process", to conclude a treaty. The Conference was also significant for the high levels of participation from the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and engaged non-governmental organizations.

94. Since the Ottawa Conference momentum has continued to grow. Several meetings and conferences were held during the first half of 1997 to build awareness and support for the ban treaty, including the Expert Meeting on the Convention for the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines (Vienna, 12-14 February), the International Meeting of Experts on the Possible Verification of a Comprehensive International Treaty Prohibiting Anti-Personnel Landmines (Bonn, 24 and 25 April) and the International Conference for a Total Ban on Anti-Personnel Landmines (Brussels, 24-27 June). By June, some 75 States had publicly stated a willingness to sign a ban treaty in December, with more coming forward steadily each month. Other key dates included the negotiation of a final treaty text in Oslo (1-12 September) and the culmination of the process, in early December, with the signing of the treaty in Ottawa.

95. In addition to its formal meetings the Ottawa process has provided the catalyst for a series of new regional initiatives. One such meeting, the Baltic/Central European States Meeting and NGO Strategy Session, held in Stockholm from 23 to 25 May 1997, brought together more than 70 representatives from Baltic and Eastern European Governments, along with numerous non-governmental organizations and other bodies such as ICRC, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and other landmine specialists.

96. The General Assembly can also share credit for adding focus and momentum to the Ottawa process. Significantly the Brussels Declaration, adopted at the International Conference for a Total Ban on Anti-Personnel Landmines, in highlighting the essential elements of the ban treaty, seeks to demonstrate its accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/45 S of 10 December 1996. The Assembly urged States to pursue vigorously an international agreement to ban the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines with a view to completing the negotiation as soon as possible. The resolution also urged States to accede to the amended Protocol II of the Convention on Inhumane Weapons, and called upon States to declare and implement the various bans, moratoriums or other restrictions already declared by States on anti-personnel landmines - particularly on operational use and transfer - on the earliest possible date. Significantly, the vote was unopposed in the Assembly, with only 10 abstentions. The Secretary-General has also played a key role in consistently and resolutely supporting a total ban on the use, manufacture, production and export of landmines.

97. Many States have acted resolutely within existing regional organizations towards the goal of banning anti-personnel landmines. Both the Organization of African Unity, at its Conference on a Landmine-Free Africa: The OAU and the Legacy of Anti-Personnel Mines (Johannesburg, 19-21 May 1997), and the Organization of American States at its meeting in Lima in June, committed themselves to create mine-free zones and to push forward the ban process in all the available venues of international action. In particular, both organizations committed themselves firmly to the Ottawa process.

98. Individually, States of all continents have also taken significant measures against landmines during the course of the period covered by the present report. Many have announced their intention to enact legislation banning landmines. In a number of States, that commitment has also translated into a decision to destroy stockpiles. Other States have also made positive steps during the year, such as adopting export moratoriums or permanent bans on exports.

H. Promoting greater public support

99. As part of the overall communication and advocacy strategy of the United Nations, several creative initiatives, taking advantage of current information technologies, have been employed to increase public awareness of landmines and to mobilize international support for a total ban. Those initiatives, which target non-traditional audiences, include multimedia exhibitions, a redesign and launch of the demining Web site, a video on the global crisis of landmines and Landmines magazine.

100. The exhibitions, which highlight the social and economic devastation caused by landmines, consist of artistically designed graphic panels, a simulated minefield with trigger mats and strobes, a landmine display case, a diorama displaying manual demining techniques and equipment, an Internet connection, and a laser-disk video display. The exhibits have been displayed in Tokyo, Ottawa, New York, Geneva and Vienna, and, in 1998 they will be on display at the British Imperial War Museum in London for six months.

101. The United Nations demining Web site, which is visited approximately 8,000 times a week, has been upgraded with funding from the Government of Germany to take advantage of advances in Web technology and has substantially expanded its content. The Web site serves as a central information point that links organizations and other concerned groups in the field of mine action.

102. A 14-minute video, which describes the many issues related to mine action, has been distributed to teachers' federations and major non-governmental organizations for use at meetings and conferences as well as in the classroom. The footage from the video has been extensively used by the media and is in the process of being reproduced for wider distribution.

103. The circulation of the quarterly magazine Landmines has increased over the past year by 500 per cent - to more than 10,000 - and all aspects of production have been brought in-house. The magazine, the only publication dedicated to the issue of landmines, is also available on the demining Web site.

III. CONCLUSIONS

104. During 1996 and 1997, there has been an increase in the number of mine-action programmes in place and their scope. Meanwhile, mine action has come to mean more than mine clearance; it has also come to encompass mine awareness, victim assistance and globally effective advocacy.

105. Coordination within the United Nations system has improved, and cooperation with willing partners from outside the Organization has been enhanced through a policy that sees a role for each party but that is carried out in a coordinated fashion.

106. Advocacy has achieved further successes to the point that a global ban on anti-personnel landmines seems well within reach. There is, however, more to be done, both within the United Nations system and in the international community at large.

107. First, as has been stated, the focal point for mine action has been moved to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. In carrying out its mission, the Department will ensure that the blending of a humanitarian demining culture with the demining culture required for peacekeeping will have a synergetic, enhancing effect upon the conduct of mine-action activities within the United Nations system.

108. Second, while advances have been made, technological developments have so far been found wanting in their ability to benefit mine action. While the United Nations will be providing a clearing house for technological information and new developments, Member States involved in the appropriate research and development must increase their efforts to achieve the necessary breakthroughs, preferably in a coordinated and transparent manner.

109. Third, the United Nations has not developed an operational capacity in the area of landmine survivor assistance to date, although it has worked closely with a number of agencies active in this field. The United Nations continues to see its role in this regard as being primarily one of coordination and support.

110. Fourth, while some programmes have progressed, others have declined because of local constraints on the ability to provide assistance. While the most obvious of these has been a recurrence of conflict, other constraints, such as the levying of exorbitant taxes or the presence of questionable business practices, have made several donors cautious to the point of non-involvement. It is important, therefore, to increase affected countries' receptivity to accepting and to providing assistance by overcoming those restraints.

111. Fifth, it is time to define the extent and breadth of the mine problem once and for all. A more precise global assessment of the mine problem is needed, based on the most inclusive possible range of factors, including the political, humanitarian, developmental, economic and security-related. This will result in a dynamic list of opportunities for mine action across the spectrum of risk reduction, mine clearance, and victim assistance.

112. Finally, mine-action programmes are not only about mines. Rather, they are about people and their interactions with a mine-contaminated environment. The aim of mine-action programmes, therefore, is not only technical - to survey, mark and eradicate mines - but also humanitarian and developmental - to create an environment in which people can live more safely and in which economic and social development can occur free from the constraints imposed by landmine contamination. These are the goals of the United Nations mine-action activities.

ANNEX

Funds received and pledged for the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance, as at 1 November 1997

(In United States dollars)

Donors	Payments	Pledges	Total
Austria	14 430.24		14 430.24
Australia	789 482.37		789 482.37
Belgium	333 841.34	150 000.00	483 841.34
Brazil	3 000.00		3 000.00
Cambodia	1 000.00		1 000.00
Canada	601 046.36		601 046.36
Croatia	1 000.00		1 000.00
Czech Republic	22 500.00		22 500.00
Denmark	4 282 948.78		4 282 948.78
Finland	232 022.75		232 022.75
France	395 818.65		395 818.65
Germany	1 449 424.46		1 449 424.46
Greece	80 000.00		80 000.00
Holy See	4 000.00		4 000.00
Iceland	5 000.00		5 000.00
Indonesia	40 000.00		40 000.00
Ireland	793 671.92		793 671.92
Israel	73 000.00		73 000.00
Italy	1 205 283.95		1 205 283.95
Japan	6 200 060.00	900 000.00	7 100 060.00
Liechtenstein	7 785.13	23 000.00	30 785.13
Luxembourg	226 567.50		226 567.50
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya		25 000.00	25 000.00
Malta	1 952.00		1 952.00
Monaco	19 000.00		19 000.00
Namibia	500.00		500.00

Donors	Payments	Pledges	Total
New Zealand	319 025.00		319 025.00
Nicaragua		111 731.84	111 731.84
Norway	1 460 980.82	150 000.00	1 610 980.82
Portugal	150 000.00		150 000.00
Republic of Korea	100 000.00		100 000.00
Saudi Arabia	50 000.00		50 000.00
Slovakia	10 000.00		10 000.00
South Africa		10 000.00	10 000.00
Spain	205 000.00	335 000.00	540 000.00
Sweden	1 150 803.97		1 150 803.97
Switzerland	2 163 850.80	675 000.00	2 838 850.80
Netherlands		600 000.00	600 000.00
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	1 062 175.00		1 062 175.00
United States of America	2 200 000.00		2 200 000.00
European Union	6 654 861.60	6 205 000.00	12 859 861.60
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	10 000.00		10 000.00
Individuals	3 964.90		3 964.90
United Nations Development Programme	20 000.00		20 000.00
United Nations Children's Fund	20 000.00		20 000.00
World Food Programme		10 000.00	10 000.00
Total	32 363 997.54	9 194 731.84	41 558 729.38